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ABSTRACT

Little is known about how children gain interpersonal access in settings where adults are not present or are unavailable. This study sought to describe children's strategies for access into and withdrawal from peer interactive episodes in a nursery school. Data were collected from direct observations of two groups of children. One group attended morning sessions, the other afternoon sessions, and each group consisted of about 25 children. The first phase of data collection involved three weeks of unobtrusive monitoring, and was followed by two months of participant observation. Five months of video- taping peer interaction followed. Strategies were defined as being (1) episode access strategy; (2) episode withdrawal strategy; (3) access response; and (4) withdrawal response. Findings indicate that children have more complex strategies for access than for withdrawal routines. It is further concluded that access routines are learned in everyday peer activities, but that withdrawal routines may be dependent on formal training by adults. (AM)

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"We're Friends, Right?": Children's Use of Access Rituals In a Nursery School

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RELEVANCE TO EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The acquisition of communicative competence has become a principal focus of educationally-oriented sociolinguistic research. William Corsaro's paper explores an aspect of the acquisition process that takes place in a nursery school setting, but is independent of the official curriculum or teacher involvement, namely, the informal learning of communicative skills attendant upon peer group interaction. Specifically, his paper deals with the acquisition of competence in the use of strategies for gaining access to (or withdrawing from) an ongoing situation or activity. Access rituals represent an important social-interactional skill, and educators will find it useful to know of the role played by the unofficial, informal social organization of the classroom in the acquisition process.

Richard Bauman, Editor
Working Papers Series

"WE'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT?":

CHILDREN'S USE OF ACCESS RITUALS IN A NURSERY SCHOOL

William A. Corsaro

INTRODUCTION

Goffman (1971) maintains greetings and farewells are ritual displays that mark a change in the degree of interpersonal access and terms such behavior "access ritual." Detailed analyses of access rituals (cf. Goffman, 1961, 1971, 1974, and Schiffrin, 1977) demonstrate both the complexity of the use of these communicative devices and their importance for the production and maintenance of social order in everyday interaction. Recent work on greetings (Youssouf, Grimshaw, and Bird, 1976) and other politeness formulas (Ferguson, 1976) involves the examination of access rituals as universals by presenting analyses of extensive cross-cultural data.

Although these studies demonstrate the important functions of access rituals in social interaction, there are few references to and even fewer studies of the acquisition of access rituals. In one of the few studies bearing on acquisition, Gleason and Weintraub (1976) present an analysis of a verbal "routine" (Trick or Treat) used by American children at Halloween. Gleason and Weintraub found correct performance of the routine increased with age. However, the authors were more concerned with role of adults in the children's acquisition of the routine than with variations in performance by age. Gleason and Weintraub maintain verbal routines of this type are acquired differently from the rest of language because they are formally taught (e.g. "Say Bye-Bye," "What Do You Say?" "Say Hello to Mrs. Jones," etc.). The authors argue that as a result of formal training performance of verbal routines precedes competence, and children learn "why" they produce correct routines (their social functions) long after

initial performance.

Although Gleason and Weintraub indicate their analysis is limited to a highly ritualized routine and call for the study of less constrained routines, they fail to consider the importance of peer interaction for the acquisition of access rituals. As the data in the present report will suggest peer interaction may be of equal or greater importance (than adult-child interaction) for children's acquisition of "why" access rituals are necessary for entry into peer interactive events.

The study of children's acquisition of communicative competence must be based on observations of children in a range of social-ecological settings (cf. Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro, 1977). Preschool children have interactive experiences in a broad range of contexts (home, nursery school, playground, play areas near the home, homes of playmates, etc.) with a variety of interactive partners (parents, teachers, and other adults as well as peers and older and younger children). In the company of adults children may not always be concerned with the need for access rituals because adults either relinquish interpersonal space without demanding ritual displays[1], or, as Gleason and Weintraub (1976) have observed perform (or elicit the performance of) the appropriate display for children (e.g. "Say Bye-Bye," "Say Hello to Mrs. Jones," etc.)

We know little about how children gain interpersonal access in settings where adults are not present (like playgrounds) or are not continually available to insure access (like nursery schools). In these interactive contexts children must gain access if they are to participate in ongoing events. As we will see in this report many of the children's access strategies in peer interaction appear to be quite different from adult access rituals. However, these strategies do involve the children's developing awareness of the <u>functions</u> of access rituals which is a central

feature of competence. In this sense many of the children's early strategies for access in peer interactive settings may be precursors to adult access rituals, and, therefore, merit careful analysis. In this report I present a description of children's strategies for access into and withdrawal from peer interactive episodes in a nursery school.

Method

Ethnographic Context and Population

The data for this report were collected from direct observations of children in a nursery school. The school is part of a child study center staffed and operated by a state university for education and research purposes. The teaching strategy (or curriculum) and schedule employed in the nursery school allowed for a substantial period of self-selection of activities by the children. As a result I was able to sample a broad range of peer interactive events. Figure 1 depicts the physical layout of the nursery school with major social-ecological areas labelled.

There were two groups of children at the school with approximately 25 children in each group. One group attended morning sessions and ranged in age from 2.10 to 3.10 years. The second group (which had been at the school the year before) attended afternoon sessions and ranged in age from 3.10 to 4.10 years at the start of the school term. The occupational and educational backgrounds of parents of the children ranged from blue collar workers to professionals, with the majority of the children coming from professional (middle and upper class) families.

Data Collection

For purposes of brevity I will present only a short outline of data collection procedures. A more detailed description of field entry,

participant observation, and videotape recording prodecures appears in Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro (1977).

Data collection moved through a series of phases during the year long naturalistic study. The first phase involved unobtrusive monitoring of activities in the school from a concealed observation area, and was followed three weeks later by two months of participant observation. At that time video equipment was introduced into the setting and for the next five months I videotaped peer interaction at least twice a week and continued participant observation on other days. Sampling decisions were theoretical (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in that they were based on patterns isolated in field notes during participant observation. Overall I collected 27 hours of videotaped data which contained 146 interactive episodes.

Terms and Procedures of Analysis

The data analysis procedure employed in this research is inductive and a variant of the "grounded theory method" of Glaser and Strauss (1967). In this procedure data analysis moves through a series of stages from the generation of analytic categories (here the basic terms of analysis) and their properties to the discovery of patterns among categories and properties (here sequencing patterns regarding access and withdrawal) and the generation of hypotheses based on the patterns (here grounded hypotheses regarding children's acquisition of access rituals).

The generation of analytic categories is the initial phase of analysis upon which both later data collection and analysis are based. Early in the research process I formulated a definition of the "interactive episode" as a basic unit of analysis. The definition was based upon field notes of interaction in the nursery school I collected while first observing from a concealed area in the school and later during participant observation

in the school itself. In the nursery school interactive episodes are defined as those sequences of behavior which begin with the acknowledged presence of two or more interactants in an ecological area and the overt attempt(s) to arrive at a shared meaning of ongoing or emerging activity. Episodes end with physical movement of interactants from the area which results in the termination of the originally initiated activity.[2] This definition guided later data collection procedures (both participant observation and videotaping) as well as data organization and analysis.

The generation of definitions of episode access strategy, episode withdrawal strategy, and their corresponding responses occurred after I had moved into the videotaping phase of the research process.[3] The definitions were based on intensive analysis of access and withdrawal behavior recorded in field notes and initial videotapes (10 hours of taping involving approximately 75 episodes). The definitions are:

> Episode Access Strategy-any behavior (verbal or nonverbal) which is produced to gain entry (i.e. acknowledge presence plus attempts to arrive at shared meaning) into an ongoing episode.
>
> Episode Withdrawal Strategy-any behavior (verbal or nonverbal) which is produced by an interactant to terminate his or her participation in an ongoing episode.
>
> Access Response-any behavior (verbal or nonverbal) which overtly acknowledges the access strategy of another interactant.
>
> Withdrawal Response-any behavior (verbal or nonverbal) which overtly acknowledges the withdrawal strategy of another interactant.

The generation of these definitions guided sampling decisions for videotaping as well as initial data analysis regarding children's acquisition of access rituals.

The second phase of analysis involved the isolation of properties of the access strategy, access response, withdrawal strategy, and withdrawal response categories by way of comparative analysis (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I selected for analysis all the field notes involving access and/or

withdrawal and 20 of the 146 videotaped episodes.[4] The analysis process involved taking each sequence (datum) involving access or withdrawal behavior from its original source (field notes or from transcripts of videotaped episodes) and recording them verbatim on note cards. The cards were then sorted into groups (piles) based upon initial (intuitive) recognition of similarity. After the sorting process was complete I composed analytic memos which specified what each datum in a group had in common with the others. This phase of analysis (memo writing) often led to some changes in original sorting in that some data were shifted and some groups combined. The memos were the basis of the definitions of the properties of the episode access stretegy, access response, episode withdrawal strategy, and withdrawal response categories which appear in Figures 2 and 3.

The final stage of analysis involved a search for patterns among the categories and properties. In this phase I coded and analyzed 42 interactive episodes selected on the basis of theoretical sampling.[5] In the analysis I isolated patterns in the frequency distributions and sequencing of the categories and properties, and checked the consistency and strength of these patterns over time and across contexts, activities, and participants. I again composed memos which described the features of these patterns as well as their strength and consistency. This phase of analysis is presented in truncated form in the next two sections of this report. The memos were the basis of grounded hypotheses regarding children's use of access rituals in peer interaction.

Children's Access Strategies

The following example is drawn from field notes collected during the third month of participant observation in the nursery school.

Two girls, Jenny (4.0) and Betty (3.9) are playing around a sandbox in the outside courtyard of the school. I am sitting on the ground near the sandbox watching. The girls are putting sand in pots, cup cake pans, bottles and tea pots. Occasionally one of the girls would bring me a pan of sand (cake) to eat.

Another girl, Debbie (4.1) approaches and stands near me observing the other two girls. Neither J or B acknowledge her presence. D does not speak to me or the other girls, and no one speaks to her.[6] After watching for some time (5 minutes or so) she circles the sandbox three times and stops again and stands next to me. After a few more minutes of watching D moves to the sandbox and reaches for a teapot in the sand. J takes the pot away from D and mumbles "no." D backs away and again stands near me observing the activity of J and B. She then walks over next to B, who is filling the cup cake pan with sand. D watches B for just a few seconds, then says:

(1)D-B: We're friends, right? We're friends, right B?
(B, not looking up at D and while continuing to place sand in the pan, says:)
(2)B-D: Right.
(D now moves alongside B and takes a pot and spoon and begins putting sand in the pot.)
(3)D-B: I'm making coffee.
(4)B-D: I'm making cupcakes.
(5)B-J: We're mothers, right J?
(6)J-B: Right.
(This now triadic episode continued for 20 more minutes until the teachers announced "clean up"time.)

In this example one of the girls, Debbie, wanted to enter an ongoing episode involving Jenny and Betty. All three of these children had frequently played together (both in dyads and triads) before the occurrence of this episode. Debbie's first access strategy was fairly simple. She merely physically placed herself in the ecological area in which the episode was occurring. She received no response and, therefore, expanded her attempt at

access via a device I call encirclement (i.e. she physically circled the area). This strategy also received no response and she then entered directly into the area and produced behavior similar to that of the two girls playing there (i.e. she picked up a teapot). However, J responded negatively by taking the teapot away from D, who then moved to the fringe area again for a short time. D then entered the area and made a verbal reference to affiliation (friendship) to B. B responded positively to this strategy, but did not explicitly invite D to play. D then repeated an earlier strategy and produced similar behavior, this time verbally describing what she is doing ("making coffee"). B responded with a verbal description of her activity ("making cupcakes"), and then went on to define the situation further ("we're mothers") eliciting the acknowledgement of her playmate, J, by way of a tag question.

There were a wide variety of access sequences in the peer interactive data. Many, unlike this example, did not always result in successful entry into an ongoing episode. However, this particular example is, in one respect, representative of the overwhelming majority of cases in the data. Note that in this example there is no formal negotiation regarding entry (e.g. Debbie does not say "Hi," "What'ya doing?" or "Can I Play?"), as we might expect to find in adult-adult interaction. The child attempting access relied instead on more indirect and often nonverbal strategies (e.g. nonverbal entry, circling, producing a variant of the ongoing behavior, and finally making a reference to friendship).

As we see in Table 1 these were, except for the verbal reference to friendship, among the most frequently employed access strategies. In fact these three strategies (nonverbal entry, encirclement, and producing

a variant of the ongoing behavior) along with disruptive entry and making a claim on the area account for nearly 80% of the access data.

Of the five strategies referred to above, four (all but claim on an area) basically involve the children's production and monitoring of nonverbal cues. Disruptive entry is almost always physically disruptive in nature involving the taking of objects from participants or, in some cases, pushing and other physical conflict. It is also interesting that only one of these strategies, producing a variant of ongoing behavior, is even moderately likely to receive a positive response (56% of the time). However, as we shall see shortly the sequencing of access strategies is more important than initial response.

What is most interesting about the data in Table 1 is the infrequent use of more direct, verbal access strategies. The children did produce such strategies (e.g. Request for Access, Questioning Participants, and Greeting) which could be taken as a demonstration of competence. But why are these adult-like (at least based on my adult intuition) strategies employed so infrequently? One possibility is the nature of peer interaction in the nursery school. When we look at the percentage of response type for the total access data (Table 1) we see the probability of being ignored or receiving a negative response is much higher than receiving a positive response (68.4% to 31.6%). Having participated in peer interaction in this setting for a year, this finding is not surprising. I soon learned access into peer activities was a fragile process, and one must be prepared for overt rejection. However, what is surprising is the children do not rely on access strategies which are more likely to lead to positive responses (e.g. the three adult-like strategies discussed previously among others, see Table 1).

Since the data cover a nine month period as well as two age groups, this finding appears to argue against an explanation of acquisition based solely on function. That is the children do not seem to learn to rely on strategies that work. Or do they? And should we really be so quick to put aside the lack of competence argument just because the children can and do produce adult-like access strategies?

To answer these questions we must (1) examine the frequency distribution data by age group to check on shifts which might indicate developing competence or learning; (2) go beyond static production-response data and examine access sequencing patterns; and (3) interpret sequencing patterns regarding both the nature of peer interaction in the nursery school and recent theory on the development of communicative competence.

Table 2 contains data on the frequency distribution of access strategies by age group. Overall the data are similar for the two groups. The only major difference is that the older children are less likely to disrupt ongoing activity in their attempts at access. On the other hand, the older children are more likely to make a verbal claim on an area or object in the area than are the younger children. These differences suggest the older children are more likely to negotiate claims on areas and objects than are the younger children who tend to physically move into an area and take an object which leads to disruption. This finding suggests the older children, now in their second year at the school, may be moving to more efficient (and adult-like) access strategies.

Pursuing this point we can compare the two groups regarding their use of the three adult-like strategies (Request for Access, Questioning Participants, and Greeting). These three strategies account for 12.4% of the older children's access behavior compared to 7.2% for the younger children. The

difference indicates some learning, but both the differences and the percentages themselves are small. Overall the data suggest a heavy reliance on nonverbal and indirect access behavior even when we take age into account.

Again the question arises, is this reliance due to the success of the most frequently used strategies for gaining access? Again the answer seems to be no. In the lower section of Table 2 we see that overall the older children are more likely to receive positive access responses than are the younger children. This difference is partially explained by the older children's more frequent use of negotiation rather than disruption when claiming an area. However, there is still no clear relationship between frequency of use and positive access response. The most frequently employed access strategies are not the more effective regardless of age of participants.

Overall the frequency data by age group suggest specific learning regarding formal negotiation of claims on areas and objects in peer interaction. We still know relatively little about why the children rely on the strategies they do. We need to expand our criterion of "effectiveness" beyond the initial access response and examine access sequencing patterns in the data.

Table 3 contains sequencing data for the five most frequently employed access strategies. The table breaks down the data into rounds (access strategy-response exchange) for all access sequences. Each column in Table 3 contains the percentage breakdowns of rounds by strategy (e.g. 45.5% of all one-round sequences began with nonverbal entry, 21.4% of all two-round sequences contained nonverbal entry with all 15 instances occurring in the initial position, 19.3% of all three-round sequences contained nonverbal entry, etc.). As we can see 70% of the sequences were one round in length

with nearly half (45.5%) of the one-round sequences beginning with nonverbal entry. If an access attempt moved to a second round the most likely strategy employed was the production of a variant of the ongoing behavior (31.5%). This same strategy was also the most likely to appear if access moved to a third round. If access went beyond three rounds one of the more infrequently employed strategies (e.g. other than the five listed) was most probable to appear (29.1%).

Table 4 contains data both on sequencing and probability of successful access. Successful access is defined as eventual acceptance into an ongoing episode, and may be preceded by an unlimited number of negative responses or non-responses. Unsuccessful access is defined as terminating an access attempt by leaving an area without further attempts at access during the course of the episode, or as failure to gain acceptance prior to the end of an episode. In Table 4 the five most frequently employed strategies and all the other strategies combined are grouped in terms of frequency by round (e.g. 64.8% of the 108 occurrences of nonverbal entry appeared in one round sequences, 13.9% in two round sequences, etc.). These data are interesting in several respects. First, nonverbal entry is primarily confined to one round sequences which implies a move to one of the remaining strategies in later rounds. Second, the probability of successful access increases if the sequence moves beyond one round for all strategies except disruptive entry, where successful access is always unlikely, and producing a variant of ongoing behavior, where there is a rather high probability of successful access across all rounds. Finally, the sequencing data indicate that for most of the strategies the probability of successful access is highest in sequences of three or more rounds.

Given this information about sequencing of access strategies and its relationship to the probability of successful access, we can return to an

earlier question about the data. Why do children rely on indirect and often nonverbal access strategies which have less probability of initial positive outcomes? As the data indicate although these strategies may not lead to immediate access they often do work if the sequence continues beyond the initial exchange. In sum, the children often rely on a sequence of strategies which: (1) best meets the social-ecological demands of the nursery school setting; and (2) reflects the children's communicative abilities at this stage of development.

Regarding social-ecological demands a brief discussion of the nature of peer interaction in the nursery school is in order. The children spend the majority of their time in peer interaction while at the nursery school. Peer activities are, for the most part, self-selected and each child must either initiate his own activity and recruit others or enter into ongoing interactive episodes. It is a typical occurrence for a child to find himself alone in the school (for a variety of reasons) with the need to gain access into an ongoing event.

In many respects the nursery school is like what Goffman (1961) has termed a multi-focused party (in layman's terms, a cocktail party). At these parties there are generally several clusters of participants (who usually know one another) dispersed in various areas of the setting. The participants, somewhat like the young child in the nursery school, often feel there is a need to circulate from one group to another. Also when party members find themselves alone, for whatever reason, they, very much like the children in the nursery school, have a strong need to gain access into an ongoing conversation or activity.

There are, to my knowledge, no careful studies of access rituals at multi-focused parties, and, therefore, no adult model for access in such settings which could be used for comparative purposes. However, the value

of an adult model, even if one existed, would be limited. Although the nursery school shares features with the multi-focused party, there are important differences. Interaction in the nursery school is fragile and ongoing activities can break down with even minimal disruption. As a result the children tend to protect interaction in ongoing episodes by discouraging most initial attempts at access by other children. I observed repeatedly groups of children deciding to "not let anyone else in" their activity while in early stages of deciding exactly what it was they were doing. Note the following exchanges of two boys as they arrive in a vacant play area (the outside sandbox).

> A and B move to sandbox and each pick up hoses in sand. The teacher had just turned on the hoses so that water was flowing into the sandbox from each of several individual hoses.
>
> A: Hey, the hoses are on!
> B: Yeah, let's make a lake.
> A: And nobody else can come in, right?
> B: Right.

In the nursery school, unlike the adult multi-focused party, participants in ongoing events are on-guard against intrusion while those who wish to enter expect to be rebuked or discouraged.

Patterns in the employment of access strategies and the probability of successful entry reflect these basic facts about the nursery school setting. The high percentage of single round sequences are a case in point. We saw earlier (see Table 3) that 45.5% of these sequences begin with <u>nonverbal entry</u>. This strategy when used in one round sequences led to successful entry only 25.7% of the time, again an indication that children anticipate the approach of others into their play areas and are prepared to discourage entry. Although <u>nonverbal entry</u> does not often lead to successful entry in one round sequences it is, nevertheless, a useful strategy. If the

child, who employs this strategy, receives no overt response to his entry he often monitors the ongoing activity. Careful monitoring leads to the acquisition of information which can be useful for the production of other access strategies in later rounds. One of the most common sequences was the following:

Round	Strategy	Response
1	Nonverbal Entry	No Response
2	Producing a Variant of the Ongoing Behavior	Positive (Acceptance)

This strategy was the most frequent multiple round sequence, and led to successful entry in 90% of the cases in which it was employed.

Given the nature of peer interaction in the nursery school the nonverbal entry plus producing a variant of ongoing behavior sequence, as well as other indirect sequences (e.g. encirclement plus producing a variant, and nonverbal entry plus reference to affiliation or offering a gift) may be favored by children over more direct strategies like greetings, questioning of participants, or requests for access. As we know from the work of Schegloff (1972) on conversational openings the structure of these more direct access strategies demands a response from the hearer. Since the children realize that initial responses are often negative they may opt for more indirect (and multiple sequence) strategies like those described above.

However, we still can not overlook the possibility that the children's use of access strategies in these data may be a reflection of their developing communicative competence. What is most interesting about the data in this regard is the children's heavy reliance on nonverbal strategies and the successive stringing of nonverbal and verbal strategies in access sequences. In a recent paper on context in children's speech Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz

(1976) argue that adults foreground attention to the verbal semantic-syntactic channel of information while relying on a background of nonverbal information in other modalities. In this view of what Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz refer to as "contextualization," adults communicate in line with "performance rules which require them to make a statement in several modalities at once, by movement, kinesic gesture, semantic routine, intonation patterns--all the full battery of communicative signaling---" (1976, p. 21). Children's communication, on the other hand, is marked by a lack of modality redundancy, and as Cook-Gumperz (1975) has observed the division between foreground and background features is more fluid for children than for adults. In this sense children's communication (including strategies for access in peer interaction) is both more literal and more indirect than adult communication.

The patterns in the access data seem to be in line with this interpretation of child speech. The children produced a broad range of strategies involving several modalities, but relied more on nonverbal and indirect access strategies. Also the children often produced strings of successive strategies which in many instances involved movement across modalities. We know, of course, that the features of this particular setting have some bearing on these patterns. However, the range of children's access strategies and the sequencing techniques can be seen as precursors to adult access rituals. In time, through additional interactive experiences in a variety of settings, the children may come to combine (or collapse) many of the access strategies which appear in these data into a smaller set of access rituals or routines via modality redundancy. Additional data on children's use of access rituals in other settings is necessary to properly evaluate this hypothesis.

Children's Withdrawal Strategies

The following example was drawn from a videotaped interactive episode

collected during the eighth month of the study.

> Three girls, Barbara (3.8), Susan (3.9), and Linda (4.6) have been playing for several minutes when they decided to pretend a wooden box in the outside yard was a TV. After a few minutes of watching TV and a great deal of channel-changing the following sequence occured.
>
> B-SL: I want to--I want Charlie Brown
> S-B: Ok--
> L-BS: You're getting it (the TV) too close.
> S-BL: Ok, we'll turn on Charlie Brown.
> (Pretends to change channel)
> (L now gets up and stands on top of TV)
> (B and S also stand up)
> B-S: I'm tired, Oh--
> (B suddenly runs off across outside yard to swings. Another child, Rita, is in one of the swings and the other swing is vacant. B runs to vacant swing. B made no verbal marking of her withdrawal and S and L show no awareness of her absence.)
> S-L: Hey, let's jump on the bug, L.
> (S points to bug in front of TV)
>
> This now dyadic episode continued for approximately 10 more minutes until clean up time.

The withdrawal strategy in this example was a simple one. The child merely left the ecological area where the interactive episode was underway without comment or remark. What is also interesting is the lack of response from those interactants who remained in the area. As we can see in Table 5 withdrawal without a marker or later return accounts for over 60% of the data for both age groups, and this withdrawal strategy is only rarely acknowledged (16.2% of the time). There were a total of 58 withdrawal strategy sequences in the data, and of these 58, 31 or 53.4% were withdrawal with no marker or later return.

The withdrawal data are especially interesting given the previous discussion of children's developing communicative competence. The children seem to see no need to mark the obvious fact of leaving the scene as cessation of activity. To verbally mark withdrawal with a ritual farewell or a justification as adults do is again a form of modality redundancy. The adult redundancy in this case does, however, carry important ritual meaning. The verbal marking preceding or accompanying the physical movement from interpersonal space goes beyond the literal meaning "I am about to be no longer a part of the activity," it is also a way of communicating one's feelings about the participants in and activities of the encounter.

Conclusions

The present study is limited to peer interaction in a nursery school setting and additional studies on children's use of access in different settings and at different ages are needed. The findings demonstrate that children are both more concerned with and have more complex strategies for access than for withdrawal routines. In this regard peer interaction would seem to be important for the child's acquisition of access ritual or routines, and his discovery of the importance and utility of modality redundancy in the communicative process. In this sense children can learn a great deal informally about access routines in everyday peer activities, and the strategies reported on here may be precursors to adult access rituals.

However, when it comes to withdrawal or termination routines it appears Gleason and Weintraub (1976) may be correct in their stressing of the importance of formal training by adults. Gleason and Weintraub may also be correct (for termination routines) when they argue that performance comes first by way of

formal training and "only later, long after he has learned to say Bye Bye or Thank you--might the child come to know what, if anything, it all means." (1976, p. 134). The data in this report suggest that when that time comes the child might also come to see the relationship between the social rules and cognitive skills he acquired earlier in learning access strategies and those necessary for the processing and production of termination routines.

Figure 2 - Access Strategies and Responses

Strategies

Nonverbal Entry - entering into or near area where episode is underway without verbal marking

Producing Variant of Ongoing Behavior - entering into area where episode is underway and (verbally and/or nonverbally) producing behavior similar to that underway

Disruptive Entry - entering into area where episode is underway and (verbally and/or nonverbally) producing behavior which physically disrupts ongoing activity

Encirclement - physically circling area where episode is underway without verbal marking

Making Claim on Area or Object - entering into area where episode is underway and verbally making claim on area or an object in the area

Request for Access - entering into area where episode is underway and verbally requesting permission for access

Questioning Participants - entering into area where episode is underway and questioning participants regarding ongoing activity

Reference to Adult Authority - entering into area where episode is underway and producing verbal reference to adult authority or rules regarding access to play area

Offering of Object - entering into area where episode is underway and (verbally and/or nonverbally) offering an object (gift) to one or more of the participants

Greeting - entering into area where episode is underway and verbally greeting one or more of the participants

Reference to Affiliation - entering into area where episode is underway and producing verbal reference to affiliation (friendship) with one or more of the participants

Aid from Non-Participant - verbally requesting aid or help to gain access from non-participant(s) prior to or during entry into area where episode is underway

Accepting Invitation - entering into area where episode is underway to accept an invitation to participate from one or more of the participants

Suggest Other Activity - entering into area where episode is underway and asking one or more participants to engage in other activity

(cont'd)

Figure 2 (cont'd)

Reference to Individual Characteristics - entering into area where episode is underway and producing verbal reference to individual characteristics of one or more participants

Responses

Positive Response - verbal and/or nonverbal acknowledgement of access behavior and acceptance into activity with or without participation specified

Negative Response - verbal and/or nonverbal rebuke (refusal to access) with or without justification

Figure 3 - Withdrawal Strategies and Responses

Strategies

Verbal Description or Justification - verbally describing and/or justifying termination (without mutual "farewell" prior to or during withdrawal from area where episode is underway

Ritual Farewell - verbally producing ritual farewell as a marker of termination prior to or during withdrawal from area where episode is underway

Unmarked with Later Return - unmarked withdrawal from area where episode is underway which is followed by later return to ongoing activity

Unmarked Without Return - unmarked withdrawal from area where episode is underway with no subsequent return

Responses

Discourage Withdrawal - verbal and/or nonverbal attempt by one participant in an ongoing episode to discourage or prevent the withdrawal of another

Acknowledge Withdrawal - verbal acknowledge of withdrawal behavior of one participant by other participant(s) in an ongoing episode

Late Acknowledgement - verbal acknowledgement of participant's absence after withdrawal to remaining participants

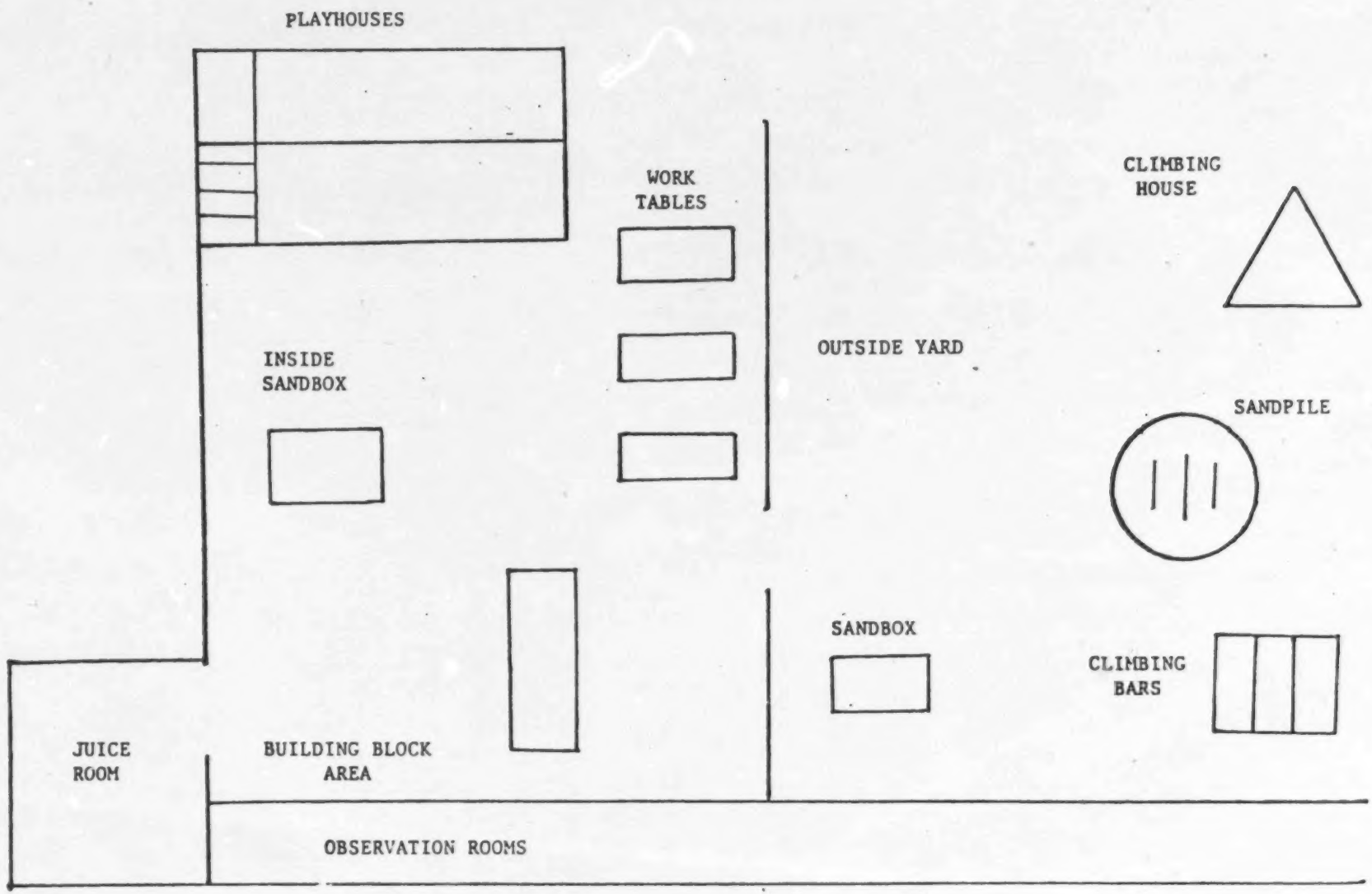

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FIGURE 1 Physical Layout of Nursery School

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Table 1 - Frequency Distribution of Access Strategies and Responses

Strategy:	N	%	Response: Positive N	%	Negative N	%	No Response N	%
Nonverbal Entry	115	(33.6)	17	(14.8)	43	(37.4)	55	(48.7)
Producing Variant of Ongoing Behavior	82	(24.0)	46	(56.1)	23	(28.0)	13	(15.9
Disruptive Entry	28	(8.2)	3	(10.7)	23	(82.1)	2	(7.2)
Encirclement	22	(6.4)	2	(9.1)	3	(13.6)	17	(77.3)
Claim on Area or Object	20	(5.9)	7	(35.0)	9	(45.0)	4	(20.0)
Request for Access	13	(3.8)	8	(61.5)	0	(0.0)	5	(38.5)
Questioning Participants	12	(3.5)	7	(58.3)	1	(8.4)	4	(33.3)
Reference to Adult Authority	10	(2.9)	1	(10.0)	6	(60.0)	3	(30.0)
Offering of Object	8	(2.3)	3	(37.5)	4	(50.0)	1	(12.5)
Greeting	8	(2.3)	4	(50.0)	3	(37.5)	1	(12.5)
Reference to Affiliation	7	(2.0)	3	(42.8)	3	(42.8)	1	(14.4)
Aid from Non-Participant(s)	6	(1.8)	0	(0.0)	2	(33.3)	4	(66.7)
Accepting Invitation	6	(1.8)	3	(50.0)	0	(0.0)	3	(50.0)
Suggest Other Activity	3	(0.9)	3	(100.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Reference to Individual Characteristics	2	(0.6)	2	(100.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Total:	342		108	(31.6)	121	(35.4)	113	(33.0)

Table 2 - Frequency Districtuion of Access Strategies
by Age Group

Strategy:	Morning* N	Morning* %	Afternoon** N	Afternoon** %
Nonverbal Entry	60	(33.1)	55	(34.2)
Producing Variant of Ongoing Behavior	44	(24.2)	38	(23.6)
Disruptive Entry	21	(11.6)	7	(4.3)
Encirclement	12	(6.6)	10	(6.2)
Claim on Area or Object	7	(3.9)	13	(8.0)
Request for Access	8	(4.4)	5	(3.1)
Questioning Participants	2	(1.1)	10	(6.2)
Reference to Adult Authority	8	(4.4)	2	(1.2)
Offering of Object	7	(3.9)	1	(0.6)
Greeting	3	(1.1)	5	(3.1)
Reference to Affiliation	3	(1.1)	5	(3.1)
Aid from Non-Participant(s)	1	(0.6)	5	(3.1)
Accepting Invitation	2	(1.1)	2	(1.2)
Suggest Other Activity	1	(0.6)	2	(1.2)
Reference to Individual Characteristics	1	(0.6)	1	(0.6)
Total:	181		161	

Response by Age Group		Positive N	Positive %	Negative N	Negative %	No Response N	No Response %
Overall:	Morning (N=181)	40	(22.1)	71	(39.2)	70	(38.7)
	Afternoon (N=161)	60	(37.3)	55	(34.2)	46	(28.5)
Six Most Frequent Strategies:	Morning (N=181)	31	(20.2)	61	(39.9)	61	(39.9)
	Afternoon (N=133)	49	(36.8)	47	(35.3)	37	(27.9)

*Children ranged in age from 2.10 - 3.10 years
**Children ranged in age from 3.10 - 4.10 years

Table 3 - Sequencing of Access Strategies

	Position in Sequence (Rounds)*				
Strategy:	1	2	3	4	
Nonverbal Entry	70 (45.5)	1 15 2 0	15(21.4)	1 6 2 2 3 3	11 (19.3)	1 8 2 4 3 1 4 0	12 (25.0)	108
Producing a Variant	29 (18.8)	1 6 2 16	22 (31.5)	1 4 2 6 2 8	18 (31.6)	1 2 2 3 3 5 4 2	12 (25.0)	81
Disruptive Entry	13 (8.4)	1 1 2 2	3 (4.2)	1 4 2 1 3 1	6 (10.5)	1 0 2 1 3 1 4 3	5 (10.4)	27
Encirclement	5 (3.2)	1 4 2 3	7 (10.0)	1 2 2 4 3 1	7 (12.3)	1 1 2 1 3 0 4 1	3 (6.3)	22
Making a Claim on an Area	7 (4.5)	1 2 2 5	7 (10.0)	1 0 2 2 3 2	4 (7.0)	1 0 2 1 3 0 4 1	2 (4.2)	20
Other	30 (19.6)	1 7 2 9	16 (22.9)	1 3 2 4 3 4	11 (19.3)	1 2 2 2 3 5 4 5	14 (29.1)	71
	154 (70.0) 154 (46.8)		35 (15,9) 70 (21.2)		19 (8.6) 57 (17.3)		12 (5.5) 48 (14.5)	220 329

*There was one 5 round sequence and one 8 round sequence which accounted for the remaining 13 strategies.

Table 4 - Success of Strategy Across Sequence Rounds

		Position in Sequence (Rounds)*				
		1	2	3	4	T
Nonverbal Entry	S[a]	18 (25.7)	7 (46.7)	5 (45.5)	5 (41.6)	35 (32.4)
		70 (64.8)	15 (13.9)	11 (10.2)	12 (11.1)	108
	U[b]	52 (74.3)	8 (43.3)	6 (44.5)	7 (48.3)	73 (67.6)
Producing Variant	S	20 (69.0)	14 (63.6)	12 (66.7)	8 (66.7)	54 (66.7)
		29 (35.8)	22 (27.2)	18 (22.2)	12 (14.8)	81
	U	9 (31.0)	8 (36.3)	6 (33.3)	4 (33.3)	27 (33.3)
Disruptive Entry	S	3 (23.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)	1 (20.0)	5 (18.5)
		13 (48.1)	3 (11.1)	6 (22.2)	5 (18.6)	27
	U	10 (77.0)	3 (10.0)	5 (83.3)	4 (18.0)	22 (81.5)
Encirclement	S	1 (20.0)	3 (42.8)	4 (57.1)	2 (66.7)	10 (45.5)
		5 (22.7)	7 (31.8)	7 (31.8)	3 (13.7)	22
	U	4 (80.0)	4 (57.1)	3 (42.8)	1 (33.3)	12 (54.5)
Making Claim on Area	S	3 (42.8)	4 (57.1)	3 (75.0)	2 (100.0)	12 (60.0)
		7 (35.0)	7 (35.0)	4 (20.0)	2 (10.0)	20
	U	4 (57.1)	3 (42.8)	1 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (40.0)
Other	S	17 (56.6)	10 (62.5)	7 (63.7)	10 (71.4)	44 (62.0)
		30 (42.3)	16 (22.5)	11 (15.5)	14 (19.7)	71
	U	13 (43.4)	6 (37.5)	4 (36.3)	4 (28.6)	27 (38.0)

*There was one 5 round sequence and one 8 round sequence which accounted for the remaining 13 strategies.

a Successful
b Unsuccessful

Table 5 - Frequency Distribution of Episode Withdrawal Strategies and Responses

Strategy	Morning*	Afternoon**		Discourage	Positive Acknowledge	No Response
Description and/or Justification	7 (21.8)	6 (23.1)	13 (22.4)	2 (15.4)	4 (30.8)	7 (53.8)
Farewell Marker	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Unmarked With-Drawal, With Later Return	4 (12.5)	3 (11.5)	7 (12.1)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	5 (71.4)
Unmarked With-Drawal, No Later Return	20 (62.5)	17 (65.4)	37 (63.8)	3 (8.1)	3 (8.1)	31 (83.8)
Total	32	26	58	6 (10.3)	9 (15.6)	43 (74.1)

* Children in morning group ranged in age from 2.10 to 3.10 years.

** Children in afternoon group ranged in age from 3.10 to 4.10 years.

Notes

[1]As Gleason and Weintraub (1976) implied in their research adults (especially if not the parent of the child) relinquish access to children without demanding ritual display. The basis for this departure from expected ritual is, of course, the shared understanding among adults of the social immaturity of the child. However, just as the non-parent is expected to relinquish access, the parent or caretaker (if present) is expected to either provide the access display for the child or elicit the appropriate display. I would argue that the expected parental behavior on such occasions has as much to do with adult etiquette as with conscious attempts to teach access rituals to young children.

[2]See Cook-Gumperz and Corsaro (1977) for an extensive discussion of the implications of this definition for the video recording and analysis of peer interaction in the nursery school setting.

[3]I should repeat that the basic categories (terms) for analysis emerged prior to the discovery of properties and the later search for patterns among categories and properties. I did not first look for interesting patterns involving access or withdrawal and then work back to the specification of basic units. In fact the research process described here led to the discovery of patterns and eventually actual sequences of data which were theoretically relevant to children's acquisition of access rituals. Finally, I also isolated a strategy I have termed temporary leave-taking which I do not have space to explicate here, but which will be the basis of a forthcoming report.

[4]Of the 146 episodes, 102 contained access and/or withdrawal data. From the 102, 20 were selected based on theoretical sampling. The 20

episodes were representative in terms of age of participants, type of activity, number of participants, ecological area of the school, and month of the school term. In the episodes I selected I only analyzed peer access and withdrawal sequences (i.e. adult-child sequences were excluded from the analysis).

[5]Again the procedure (theoretical sampling) is used to insure representativeness across participants, settings, etc. This paper is a working report on children's use of access rituals. A final, forthcoming version, will be based on coding and analysis of all the videotaped episodes involving access and/or withdrawal. Although I do not have space to explicitly describe specific analytic procedures employed in this phase of the research process, I should point out that the procedures are similar to recent work on the micro-sociolinguistic analysis of naturally occurring behavior by Cicourel (1976), Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1976), and Erickson and Shultz (1977). The focus of this work is to identify how interactants signal and code contextual information to negotiate a shared understanding of what they are doing (an interpretive frame) which they can then use strategically to shape the outcome of interactive events (ef. Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz, 1976).

[6]Throughout participant observation I always followed the leads of the children in determining my degree of participation in peer activities. I tried purposely not to act like an adult, therefore, I rarely initiated activity.

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